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## *WestEd's Strategic Literacy Initiative*

# Reading Apprenticeship Academic Literacy

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In high school classrooms across the U.S., many students are profoundly inexperienced readers. They have never finished a book, they struggle with the structure and format of expository texts, they mispronounce words, they flounder with the complex sentences that fill their textbooks. They cannot make sense of the words and sentences on the pages they read. In short, they cannot use written materials to support their learning.



**Reading Apprenticeship Academic Literacy re-engages students in reading and helps them develop the kind of advanced literacy required to become life-long learners and participants in an information-based society.**

## *Course Content*

Reading Apprenticeship Academic Literacy is a year-long course to accelerate 9th grade students' reading achievement and engagement. It was developed by researchers in the Strategic Literacy Initiative (SLI) at WestEd in collaboration with teachers. This course emphasizes developing a community of learners, readers, and writers for whom metacognition (i.e. thinking about one's thinking) plays a central role.

Reading Apprenticeship® integrates well-researched practices into a coherent instructional framework for adolescent learners. These research-based practices include:

- methods of engaging students in extensive reading
- integrating explicit teaching of comprehension strategies
- establishing relevance and making personal connections to reading materials and curriculum
- identifying and using a variety of text structures to support comprehension
- engaging in structural analysis of words and sentences
- supporting collaborative sense-making activities

## *Course Structure*

This course uses the Reading Apprenticeship approach to help young people develop the knowledge, strategies, and dispositions they need to become more powerful readers of the academic materials they encounter in high school.

To help students transfer new skills and dispositions from this course to their high school curriculum, all learning is embedded in thematic curriculum units designed to appeal to young people:

**Unit 1: Reading Self and Society:** This unit explores issues including literacy and identity, literacy and power, how we read, and different kinds of reading "codes."

**Unit 2: Reading Media:** This unit is designed to help students begin to read critically for point of view, rhetorical stance and language, and other elements of writing.

**Unit 3: Reading History:** This unit explores a thematically-focused topic in history, making use of a variety of types of texts, and continuing students' attention on critical reading and writing in response to texts.



**Unit 4: Reading Science:** This unit explores a thematically-focused topic in science. Student readings are varied in difficulty and genre as in the history unit.

All units incorporate computer and internet-based multimedia technology to support reading and writing activities. Weekly plans included in the Teacher's Guide include routines for:

- developing students' motivation and sense of empowerment in reading and writing
- teacher-supported, student-selected reading
- using classroom libraries
- explicit comprehension instruction, including repeated modeling and practice
- writing instruction for informal and structured writing assignments
- building reading fluency and stamina
- analyzing and using patterns in words and sentences
- expanding and elaborating vocabulary
- metacognitive reflection and conversation to support self-regulated learning

## TEACHER TRAINING AND SUPPORT

SLI Consultants will provide initial instruction and support through an intensive 5-day summer institute. In the institute, teachers gain first-hand experience, practice, and problem solving with the core instructional routines of the course. Teachers will also receive two days of follow-up training during each semester of the program. In addition, Consultants will confer with each teacher by phone and/or e-mail weekly in the first semester, then bi-weekly in the second semester.

## Resources for teachers include:

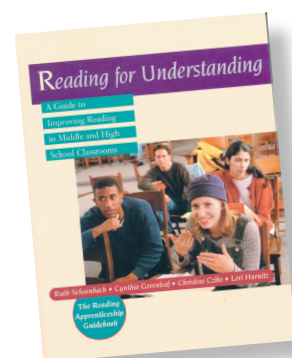
- a comprehensive Teachers' Guide
- three books describing core activities and providing readings for Unit 1 of the course
- an additional set of readings for Units 2, 3, and 4 of the course
- videotaped examples of Reading Apprenticeship classroom instruction
- access to an on-line teacher discussion group

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Based on studies carried out in a variety of schools across the country, students participating in the Reading Apprenticeship Academic Literacy Course will:

- read more and take more pleasure in reading
- have more confidence in their ability to make sense of what they read
- develop a range of strategies to support their reading comprehension
- be prepared for the challenging reading assigned in high school content-area classes
- make statistically significant gains on a standardized, norm-referenced test of reading comprehension

Training in Reading Apprenticeship provides teachers with metacognitive classroom routines for making the reasoning processes of skillful reading apparent to students. Students become self-regulated, active readers who can use a repertoire of strategies flexibly and appropriately.



**To learn more about Reading Apprenticeship please visit the SLI website:**  
**<http://www.wested.org/StrategicLiteracy>**

